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Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center Provides Care for Sexual Assault Victims

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By Lt. Adrienne Manasco, SAPR command liaison, Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center



In order to effectively support our patients there is a lot of work “behind-the-scenes” to establish comprehensive policies and sustainable education practices.

The 2015 theme of SAAPM is “Eliminate Sexual Assault: Know Your Part. Do Your Part.” This theme emphasizes how vital it is for each member of our community to uphold our role in preventing sexual assault and to respond with holistic care should a sexual assault occur. At the [Captain James A. Lovell Federal Health Care Center \(FHCC\)](#), we show that our community includes many roles and extends far beyond the walls of our facility.

We are witness to a rapidly evolving military medical system in which services engage in a variety of joint partnerships. In 2010 the Department of Defense (DoD) and Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) did just that. Five years ago Naval Health Clinic Great Lakes and the North Chicago VA Medical Center merged to become FHCC, the first of its kind. By virtue of our location at Naval Station Great Lakes, FHCC serves a broad range of clients: from Navy recruits and students, to active duty service members, reservists, retirees, dependents, and veterans of all military branches. FHCC offers the full spectrum of federal health care services and perhaps this is most apparent during Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month (SAAPM).

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During Sexual Assault Awareness and Prevention Month it is clear how many allies we have in our command and friends in our community

I am a clinical psychologist by trade but also fill the role of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response (SAPR) Command Liaison. In this position I work closely with our Sexual Assault Response Coordinator from our local Fleet and Family Support Center, Naval Station Great Lakes to ensure our command is meeting the needs of all sexual assault victims. As a medical facility, FHCC provides medical and mental health services for victims regardless of command, military branch, or duty status. In order to effectively support our patients there is a lot of work “behind-the-scenes” to establish comprehensive policies and sustainable education practices. These practices emphasize how we as an organization continue to care for our patients but also contribute to the prevention of sexual assault.

Another key member of our community is our Sexual Assault Forensic Examiner (SAFE) Medical Program Manager, RN Myna Shegog. Not only does RN Shegog ensure that a SAFE is available when needed, she provides education for our own FHCC providers, Army, Marine Corps and Air Force SAFEs, local community and Illinois state agencies, as well as other federal agencies, such as Naval Criminal Investigative Service (NCIS) agents. RN Shegog ensures SAFE providers are ready to provide high quality, patient-centered care to victims of sexual assault crimes. RN Shegog trains Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs) at local community hospitals on DoD protocols; thus ensuring DoD beneficiaries receive the same high quality care and DoD benefits in the event a FHCC SAFE provider is unavailable. RN Shegog continues to develop the SAFE training program in an effort to become a training pipeline for Navy SAFEs.

FHCC is also home to a comprehensive Outpatient Military Sexual Trauma (MST) program. The term military sexual trauma refers to “sexual assault or repeated, threatening sexual harassment” experienced during military service (*Quick Facts About VA’s Health Care Services for Military Sexual Trauma*: http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/docs/VAHCS_MST_October2014.pdf).

The FHCC MST program is led by a team that includes a MST Coordinator, MST/Telemental Health Social Worker, Psychiatrist, Addiction Treatment Program Psychologist, Clinical Pharmacist and Acute Inpatient Mental Health Social Worker. Veterans and active duty service members with a history of MST have access to therapists of preferred gender, evidence based individual and group psychotherapies, medication management and case management services. The MST program is led by Delia De Avila, LCSW, MST Coordinator. We are fortunate to have such a program in house for our active duty as well as veteran patients.

FHCC sexual assault prevention and response efforts would not be possible without support from a range of individuals and groups including but certainly not limited to FHCC leadership, our uniformed and civilian victim advocates, and the SAPR Program of Naval Station Great Lakes. Whether it is supporting our patients or supporting our colleagues, we are in this together and cannot do it alone. During SAAPM it is clear how many allies we have in our command and friends in our community.

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For more information about VA MST resources visit <http://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/msthome.asp>

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